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lieving that in our day Freemasonry is just such an actual Devil-worship as Michelet and Miss Murray conceive that of the witches to have been. After all, is it much more absurd to ascribe such a secret cult to the nineteenth century than to the seventeenth?

That her volume has seemed to need such fullness of review is due less to its contents than to the press from which it comes and to the praise it has received from even historian reviewers. That so lightly she or they could reach a verdict is doubtless largely for the lack in English of any thorough history of witchcraft. Alas that Mr. Lea did not live to complete his work! Perhaps even the materials which he had gathered, and which ere long will now be given to the press, may help to insure a longer suspense of judgment.

GEORGE L. BURR.

A Short History of the Irish People from the Earliest Times to 1920.

By MARY HAYDEN, M.A., Professor of Modern Irish History in the National University of Ireland, and GEORGE A. MOONAN, Barrister-at-Law, Special Lecturer on History, Leinster College of Irish. (London and New York: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1921. 20s.)

AN eminent Irish scholar, in the preface to a history of Ireland published a few years ago, observed that, while some people may be disposed to ask if there were a real need of a new history of Ireland, since there are so many already in the hands of the public, yet it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a really good work, "full, accurate, well-written, and impartial".

The scope of the present volume precludes it from pretending to the first of the foregoing qualifications; but it deserves the other three—it is accurate, well written, and, while staunchly national, it is impartial. Furthermore, this volume differs from its predecessors chiefly because these predominantly belong to the "painted landscape" type, presenting the story strongly to the imagination, recording events in their sequence but not adequately setting forth the causal nexus persisting from age to age, while this is a scientific history. It is not merely a relation of the scenes and rôles which make up the drama played on the stage of Ireland; it is a history of the Irish people.

The first book covers the period down to the coming of the Normans. The early semi-mythical and legendary stories of races and personages are not accepted as serious history. Working back from subsequent historic data, a conjectural attempt is made to determine what core of fact lies at the centre of the legendary haze. And here it may be remarked once for all that, throughout the work, there is evident a judicial caution in handling topics on which testimony is conflicting. Repeatedly, charges against men or measures that elsewhere have been accepted as proven, are here qualified with a discreet "it is said".

The basic thesis of the work is expressed in the following passage (p. 56): "The nation was a *living organism*, with periods of progress or decay, and in political, social, economic, and intellectual functions, many changes took place. But there were certain *principles* of law and government and social life which were distinctly characteristic of the entire Gaelic people. Upon these principles they remained organised until the seventeenth century, and even to the present day the Irish people are affected by their influences."

Through the events of the Norman invasion and subsequent settlement, the armed struggles between Norman and Gael, the frequent combinations of some of each party against similar combinations, are briefly but clearly described. The result of the feudal system of the Normans and the native clan system, with their conflicting principles of land-ownership, mutually modifying each other without becoming completely harmonized, is carefully analyzed. This conflict of land-tenure systems is immeasurably embroiled in the following centuries by successive "grants", plantations, and settlements. Rightly judging the tenure of land to be one of the great functions of national life, and one especially active in the efforts of the *organism* to assimilate the successive foreign elements introduced by the various plantations, the writer has traced its manifestations through each period.

Here one may be permitted to place a note of interrogation after one view in this exposition. The Ulster "tenant right" custom, which Gladstone employed as the corner-stone of his land-tenure reform legislation, was not, as the text would have it, a survival of the clan system, though there was some resemblance between them. The "Ulster custom" sprang from the first Plantation of Ulster. It attained to full vigor as an unwritten law in the lands of County Coleraine (now Derry) and adjoining territories granted to the London companies, Drapers, Salters, Skinners, etc. It extended to other estates created by the plantation "grants". The rank and file of the people brought over to colonize the forfeited estates of the Irish chiefs were indispensable partners with their leaders, who obtained the grants, in the scheme of colonization to supplant the native population. Hence, in the "settlements" they were not on the footing of mere tenants at will; they obtained a real though subordinate interest in their farms, fixity of tenure as long as they paid their rents.

Another fact that is emphasized through the course of the history is the feeble, sometimes almost negligible, authority of the English crown over the Norman and Gaelic "old strangers" and "new strangers" until the end of the Elizabethan wars, when, the text states (p. 266), "after nearly four and a half centuries, the English Conquest of Ireland was real and complete". This verdict will provoke strong dissent from some quarters. Again, from the time of Poynings's Parliament forward to 1782, the opposition of individuals and bodies who controlled or represented the national forces and conditions to interference in Irish affairs by the English

Parliament and Privy Council is shown to have been perpetually active—another manifestation of organic unity, however imperfect it may have been. Even when the leaders and representatives of the nation were in an overwhelming majority descendants of planters, Cromwellians, Williamites, they resented measures that overrode the nation. After reading that the Parliament of the eighteenth century exhibited every fault that a parliament could have, one may smile at the apologetic reflection (p. 377), "Still, with all its faults, it was an *Irish* Parliament of a kind". A poor thing, sir, but mine own!

The claim advanced in the preface that the authors have striven to be impartial is amply sustained. They have shunned the rhetorical. A leader who failed is not, therefore, denounced as a traitor or incompetent. When foreign influences have contributed any benefit, or English statesmen have made any honest endeavor to contribute to Irish welfare, the good is liberally acknowledged. The long story of misgovernment is told so temperately that, compared for instance to the denunciations of Gladstone or Macaulay, this presentation of the case frequently reads like a plea in mitigation of sentence. The evidence is submitted, and facts left to speak for themselves.

One important element of the work remains to be noticed. This is the synopsis, in chronological order, of the history of Irish literature. In each period the state of literary culture and education, the writings which are still extant or which are known to us only through later writers, their value, whether historical or purely literary, receive attention, in order to show that this living current, beginning in the remote past and at times dwindling to feeble dimensions, has nevertheless run continuously down to its vigorous expansion in the present day.

The work may be said to close with the end of the nineteenth century, although there is a final chapter in which the events of the present century, up to 1920, are chronicled without comment. In the preface, the parts for which the joint authors are respectively responsible are indicated. While the title sets forth correctly the nature of the book, as a history of the Irish people, many will regret that the other word is also apt: it is short. Enlarged to a scale that would give fuller scope for detail in the treatment, the work would become a lasting treasure for the historical student.

JAMES J. FOX.

Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1613-1614. [Master of the Rolls.] (London: H. M. Stationery Office. 1921. Pp. ix, 741. £1. 1s.)

THE decision of the Record Commissioners to continue the publication of the *Acts of the Privy Council* for the reigns of James and Charles is of greater importance to students of constitutional and administrative history than many will realize who have not already read some consider-